

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-11, 16, 18, and 19 remain pending in the application. Claim 1 is currently amended. Applicant respectfully requests for allowance of all pending claims.

Drawing Objections

Applicant acknowledges that the objection to drawings has been withdrawn as indicated in the Advisory Action.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-5, 7-9, and 13-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,135,709 (hereinafter referred to as "Stones").

Independent claim 1, as amended, is directed to a vacuum pumping arrangement comprising: a turbomolecular pumping mechanism having a rotor, wherein the rotor comprises a rotor body and rotor blades extending radially outwards from the rotor body; and a molecular drag pumping mechanism connected in series with the turbomolecular pumping mechanism, wherein a rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is affixed to the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism; and wherein the rotor blades of the turbomolecular pumping mechanism are provided with an annular ring, disposed co-axially with the rotor body and positioned between two ends of each of the rotor blades in a radial direction, to which the rotor of the molecular drag pumping mechanism is fixed.

The amended claim languages "the rotor comprises a rotor body and rotor blades extending radially outwards from the rotor body" and "an annular ring, disposed co-axially with the rotor body and positioned between two ends of each of the rotor blades in

a radial direction” are fully supported by the specification with reference, for example, to FIGs. 1 and 2.

In the Advisory Action, Examiner equates rotor body 52 of Stones to the annular ring of the claimed invention. See, page 2, paragraph 4. However, Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 1 recites “rotor” and “annular ring” as two separate objects. In claim 1 as understood in the context of the specification, the rotor drives the rotor blades to which the annular ring is affixed. The rotor body 52 of Stones cannot be reasonably equated to the annular ring, because the rotor body 52 drives the blades 54, instead of the other way around.

Although Applicant does not believe that the rejection in the Advisory Action is reasonable, claim 1 is amended to clarify any confusion that may exist. As amended, claim 1 now recites “an annular ring, disposed co-axially with the rotor body and positioned between two ends of each of the rotor blades in a radial direction.” This clearly distinguishes Stones, because the rotor body 52 of Stones is not disposed between two ends of the blades 54. Thus, Stones does not teach each and every element of the amended claim 1.

As such, independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference under section 102. Accordingly, claims 2-5, 7-9, and 13-19 that depend from claim 1 and include all the limitations recited therein are also patentable over the cited reference under section 102.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stones in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,465,434 to Rourk (hereinafter referred to as "Rourk") and U.S. Patent No. 5,230,924 to Schofield (hereinafter referred to as "Schofield").

As discussed above, independent claim 1 is patentable over Stones under section 102. Accordingly, claims 10-12 that depend from claim 1 and include all the limitations recited therein are also patent over Stones in view of Rourk and Schofield under section 103.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this application in an allowable form. In view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are drawn to a novel subject matter, patentably distinguishable over the prior art of record. Examiner is therefore, respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections.

Should Examiner deem that any further clarification is desirable, Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Applicant does not believe that any additional fee is due, but as a precaution, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to deposit account number 50-4244.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /Ting-Mao Chao/
Ting-Mao Chao
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 60,126

Edwards Vacuum, Inc.
Legal Service – Intellectual Property
2041 Mission College Blvd. Suite 260
Santa Clara, CA 95054

TEL: 1-408-496-1177
FAX: 1-408-496-1188

Customer No.: 71134